

# Proposed Revisions to the July 27<sup>th</sup> Draft of the York County Comprehensive Plan: Charting the Course to 2025



York County Planning Division  
September 7, 2005

## **Contents – Proposed Replacement Pages**

Introduction – Page 3

Community Facilities – Pages 36 and 38

Environment – Pages 4, 6, 21, and 22-27

Historic Resources – Pages 1-4, 7-8, and 15

Transportation – Pages 2, 11-12, 19, and 21

Land Use – Pages 1-4, 7-8, 15-17, 19, 22, 30, and 32

County plans for the next 20 years. Questions on the survey were developed by the Steering Committee and staff, with assistance from a professional survey research firm, Continental Research Associates, Inc. The interviews were also conducted by Continental Research, which used statistically valid sampling methods to ensure a random survey sample that would be representative of the County population; the margin of error is  $\pm 4.9\%$ . The survey results, along with the various oral and written comments and suggestions received from the citizens through the various public input opportunities that were available, provided valuable insight to the Steering Committee as it endeavored to identify the plan goals, objectives, and implementation strategies.

After receiving the survey results, the Steering Committee continued its deliberations through July 2005, meeting with various citizens groups and property owners interested in presenting their ideas and suggestions for the plan. During this time, the Committee also reviewed, discussed, and revised draft plan elements prepared by the staff. This included a thorough review of the 2025 Land Use Map, which was the exclusive subject of four separate meetings and was also discussed at several additional meetings. The Steering Committee approved the draft plan on July 20, 2005, and forwarded it to the Planning Commission for its review. By the time it had completed its yearlong task, the Steering Committee had held 24 meetings, devoting a cumulative total of 325 volunteer hours to this project. This does not include the 15 Neighborhood Open Houses, which represented an additional commitment of several hundred volunteer hours.

The Planning Commission reviewed the draft plan update from late July through mid-September, holding a work session on August 3 and a public hearing on August 24 at which 17 County residents and/or property owners spoke. In addition, many other comments were received via mail, email, telephone, and in person. Citizen comments were incorporated into the plan where appropriate, and the Planning Commission officially certified the draft plan on September xx and transmitted it to the Board of Supervisors with a recommendation of adoption.

#### **BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ACTION** – to be completed

Like the 1991 plan, the updated plan is divided into chapters or *elements* dealing with various aspects of the County's physical development: community facilities, economic development, environment, historic resources, housing, transportation, and land use. There are also an Introduction and chapters dealing with demographics and the citizen input that was collected in the preparation of this plan. The elements are ordered alphabetically except for the Land Use element, which is presented last since it incorporates information from all the other elements. Each plan element consists of a brief introduction followed by a summary of existing conditions and trends, a section summarizing the citizen input pertaining to that element, and an analysis of the County's present and future needs. Each element then concludes with a series of recommendations divided into a broad goal, more specific objectives, and implementation strategies for achieving those objectives.

The updated *Comprehensive Plan*, like the original 1991 plan and the 1999 update, represents the combined efforts of York County's citizens, elected and appointed officials, and staff to analyze present conditions in the County, identify present and future needs, and devise strategies for meeting these needs consistent with shared community goals and objectives. It is the County's vision for its future, specific enough to provide clear guidance to present and future policy makers yet broad and flexible enough to be adapted to account for changing circumstances.

lower County begins to approach the minimum desirable school size and opportunities for expansions do not exist, it is necessary to plan for new construction.

## **GOAL, OBJECTIVES, AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

### **Goal**

York County should be a community where the citizens feel safe from crime, receive prompt and effective emergency services when needed, and have convenient access to public facilities at appropriate locations to serve them economically and efficiently.

### **Objectives**

#### **GENERAL**

1. Coordinate the location and timing of public facilities in recognition of existing and anticipated needs and characteristics -- including the age distribution and location -- of present and projected future populations.
2. Avoid wasteful duplication of effort in the construction and operation of public facilities.

#### **GOVERNMENT OFFICES**

1. Maintain historic Yorktown as the seat of County government.
2. Make optimum use of existing office space.
3. [Provide greater opportunities for the training of County personnel, in particular specialized training for law enforcement and fire and rescue personnel.](#)

#### **DETENTION AND LAW ENFORCEMENT**

1. Provide Sheriff's facilities to accommodate manpower levels sufficient to provide prompt and effective crime protection, prevention, and law enforcement to all areas of the County.
2. Provide detention/correctional facilities of sufficient capacity to house securely and safely the County's future adult and juvenile inmate population.

#### **FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY**

1. [Provide fire stations to accommodate manpower levels sufficient to provide prompt and effective fire and emergency medical response to all areas of the County.](#)
2. [Maintain a five-minute average fire and emergency response time to at least 90% of the County's land area.](#)

#### **LIBRARIES**

1. Achieve higher levels of excellence in library service.
2. Provide convenient library service to all areas of the County.

#### **PARKS AND RECREATION**

2. Evaluate the need for and feasibility for constructing a warehousing center for the storage needs of County departments.
3. Provide greater opportunities for the training of County emergency services and administrative personnel in a strategically central location by assessing the feasibility of creating a stand-alone training facility.
4. Develop a pilot program to test the feasibility of allowing some County employees to work from their homes (i.e., telecommute) using modern technology as a means of alleviating pressures for additional office space.

## **DETENTION AND LAW ENFORCEMENT**

~~4.~~Evaluate the need for, feasibility, and potential effectiveness of establishing Sheriff's substations in strategic locations throughout the County.

~~2.~~Provide greater opportunities for the training of County law enforcement personnel.

## **FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY**

1. Locate and design fire stations in such a way as to provide opportunities for expansion of service as necessary based on future population growth and development patterns.
2. Continue to cooperate with neighboring localities and area military installations through mutual emergency aid agreements providing for the sharing of resources in the event of a major fire or other disaster.

~~3.~~Provide greater opportunities for the training of County fire and rescue personnel.

~~4.~~3. Consider the needs of the Fire and Rescue Service with regard to roadway access and water availability prior to approval of development plans and in all decisions regarding utility extension and roadway construction.

## **LIBRARIES**

1. Expand the number and range of library books, tapes, periodicals, and other materials as necessitated by population growth, public demand, and technological changes.
2. Continue the current practice of contributing funding to the Williamsburg Regional Library system in exchange for service to York County residents.
3. Maintain state-of-the-art on-line access to the library services of York County.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION**

1. Continue implementation of the "school/park" concept to enhance recreational use of school sites.
2. Develop a comprehensive parks and recreation master plan to coordinate the long-range acquisition of sufficient acreage for recreation facilities and public access to waterfront areas to meet the existing and future demands for both public and private recreation programs.
3. Consider the need for and feasibility of developing a public space for community events requiring meeting rooms, kitchen facilities, and multi-purpose rooms.

are conducted by the local Health Department to ensure that corrections are made to the system.

Because of the County's topography and its many peninsulas, alternative sanitary sewer systems, such as vacuum sewer systems, are frequently used. Technology for vacuum systems has been around for years, but actual application of these systems in the collection of sanitary sewer is relatively new. The use of grinder pumps can also be cost-effective and be utilized in specific applications where gravity or vacuum systems are not economically or technically feasible.

### **Erosion and Sedimentation Control**

Adequate erosion control measures will minimize off-site sediment transport and, because sediments also pick up phosphorus and nitrogen, such control results in the reduction of nutrients to the receiving waters. The County's Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance, amended and re-adopted in 1991 and then rewritten in 2002, requires that all land disturbances greater than 2,500 square feet meet state standards relative to the installation of control systems such as silt fences, straw bales, sediment basins, and check dams to control soil loss.

The Colonial Soil and Water Conservation District provides assistance to Peninsula localities on the conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources. The District staff also works with the agricultural community in preparing conservation plans and advising farmers on proper land management. In 1990 the County and the District formalized this working relationship with a Memorandum of Understanding, which provides for the Soil Conservation District to 1) assist the County with erosion and sediment control programs; 2) provide education on natural resource conservation; and 3) assist in developing ordinances, policies, and plans for managing soil, water, and natural resources. A member of the York County Board of Supervisors is appointed as a liaison representative to the District to ensure joint coordination of soil conservation efforts.

## **WATER QUALITY**

Water quality is a critical issue for every community but particularly for York County because of its location and topography. Not only is water an important resource in terms of providing drinking water, it also provides important recreational, aesthetic, and economic benefits to the County and its citizens. The regulation of surface and ground water involves many federal, state, and local programs. These regulations are directed mainly at three targets: point sources such as end-of-pipe discharges and underground storage tanks; nonpoint sources such as stormwater runoff; and nontidal and tidal wetlands. All of these sources together contribute to the level of water quality in the Chesapeake Bay, the York River, and all of their tributaries.

York County, for the most part, enjoys high-quality water in both its fresh water and brackish water systems. The protection of water systems in Virginia is the responsibility of the State Water Control Board and its regulatory agency, the Department of Environmental Quality, and to some extent the State Board of Health. Some specific issues relating to these systems are discussed below.

### **Fresh Surface Water**

Surface water impoundments, all of them owned by other jurisdictions, are the major source of drinking water in York County. The five surface water impoundments used as reservoirs for drinking water that are located completely or partially in the County are listed below:

- Lee Hall Reservoir (owned and operated by the City of Newport News)
- Harwoods Mill Reservoir (owned and operated by the City of Newport News)

and Franklin and lies approximately 150 to 400 feet below mean sea level. Below this aquifer is the Aquia Aquifer, which is not utilized much in eastern Virginia because the deposits are fine-grained and commonly contain a limy mud matrix and thin limestone beds. Deeper still is the Upper Potomac Aquifer, capable of producing large quantities of good water suitable for most uses. The two lowest aquifers, the Middle and Lower Potomac, also are capable of supplying large quantities of water but are generally too deep for all but major industrial and municipal applications.

York County has three production wells that serve the Skimino/Banbury Cross residential communities in the upper County and has recently installed two additional production wells to service the Lightfoot Corridor for future commercial and light industrial development. The source water is groundwater from five wells drawing from the Chickahominy-Piney Point aquifer. The installation of the Lightfoot wells was approved by the SWCB subsequent to computer modeling that indicated a minimal one-time draw-down of the water table would occur with the wells operating at approved production levels. The DEQ has designated York County as part of a ground water management area and major withdrawals (more than 10,000 GPD) require approval by the State Water Control Board (SWCB). The SWCB has authorized the withdrawal of 24.9 million gallons per year (68,219 GPD or 0.069 MGD) from the two wells comprising the Skimino Hills/Banbury Cross system. The depths of these wells, which are pumping an average of almost 57,000 GPD, range from 283 to 324 feet. The one well that makes up the Lightfoot system is authorized to withdraw 204.4 million gallons per year (560,000 GPD or 0.56 MGD). These wells are pumping an average of 30,567 GPD and are 310 and 318 feet deep.

The overall natural quality of the groundwater in Hampton Roads is high. Large-scale human-induced contamination of the region's aquifers is not a problem. The major threats to groundwater quality are inefficient septic systems; leaking underground storage tanks; spills and improper disposal of hazardous material; leaking surface water impoundments; leaking landfills; improper pesticide and fertilizer application; and pumping induced saltwater encroachment. The most vulnerable aquifer in the County is the Columbia since it is shallow and unconfined. Deeper aquifers can be contaminated from downward migration, and the health and economic impacts on a community can be high. It is imperative, therefore, that groundwater be protected.

In compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act, York County is required to test for over one hundred contaminants and produce an annual Consumer Confidence Report to document the quality of the drinking water distributed to customers via the County's distribution systems in the Skimino Hills, Banbury Cross, and Hubbard Lane areas. Testing conducted in 2004 detected only four contaminants (copper, fluoride, gross alpha, and gross beta), all of which were well within permissible ranges.

In addition, the Virginia Department of Health monitors wells and water supply systems serving 15 or more connections and systems serving more than 25 persons for more than 60 days of the year. Community wells and systems have quarterly testing and reporting requirements. Local Health Departments monitor non-community and non-transient wells. They also process the permits for private wells and administer the State's Private Well Regulations, which are intended to ensure that private wells are located, constructed, and operated in a manner that does not adversely affect public safety, health, or groundwater resources. The local Health Departments do not monitor, inspect, or track abandoned wells. Because improperly abandoned wells are a possible point of aquifer contamination, York County has an interest in assisting the Health Department to establish a database of abandoned wells and ensuring their proper closure. According to both the Williamsburg and Newport News offices of the Health Department, there have been no reports or complaints of saltwater intrusion into private wells in York County.

Groundwater consumption in York County via the public distribution system will likely increase over time. The Skimino wells are pumping at 83% of their capacity, and the Lightfoot wells are at 60% of capacity. When these two systems are interconnected, additional connections will be



These sewer extension criteria generally place highest priority on areas of the County that have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Shallow aquifer system susceptible to contamination from septic systems,
- Close proximity to fresh water systems,
- Close proximity to the Chesapeake Bay or tributaries, and
- Low potential for new development.

Sewer extension projects are identified in the County's *Strategic Capital Plan for Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater*, which is adopted by the Board of Supervisors and revised every two years; the current plan was adopted in 2005. The program is self-supporting and is funded through several sources of revenue including the connection fees charged to the residents receiving service, connection fees charged to developers, and one-half of the revenue generated by the County meals tax, which the voters approved in a referendum in the early 1990s. By targeting public sewer extensions toward environmentally sensitive areas and reducing the overall number of individual septic systems in the County, this ongoing program is the most effective means of preventing septic system pollution.

Another aspect of the County's ongoing utility extension program involves the extension of public water to areas that currently rely on wells or private water systems. As with the sewer program, areas are prioritized on the basis of a point system utilizing the following criteria:

- Septic problems in the area,
- Fire protection concerns,
- Water quality or quantity problems, and
- Growth factor.

While cost and design of water distribution systems are important considerations, the single most critical concern with respect to expanding the water service is the acquisition and development of a long-term supply of raw. The county participates in the Regional Raw Water Study Group formed in September 1988. After reviewing 35 alternative proposals, the RRWSG selected a preferred alternative encompassing development of a new 12.2-billion gallon storage reservoir in King William County; conservation, including intensified water use restrictions during drought and wastewater re-use for non-potable uses; and additional fresh and brackish groundwater development. After many years of study, regulatory reviews, and multiple appeals, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in July 2005 announced its intent to issue the federal permit for the King William Reservoir.

Finally, the County has an active capital improvement program for stormwater projects. New homes and businesses will add significant impervious surface – rooftops, driveways, roads, parking lots, etc. – to a County where drainage is already a serious issue in many areas. Traditional stormwater management has focused on removing quantities of water from streets and neighborhoods, with the primary goal of preventing flooding. This water, which often carries fertilizers, pesticides, soil, and debris, went untreated and was discharged directly into area waterways. Federal and state regulations now require localities to better manage the quality of the stormwater, as well as the flow rates, that are entering creeks, streams, rivers, and bays. These regulations require much planning and educational effort to be effective, but the benefits include cleaner surface water and a healthier environment.<sup>5</sup>

The County completed a comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan that has been incorporated into the *Strategic Capital Plan for Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater*. County staff studied the various drainage sub-basins under full development conditions based on projected land use. For each sub-basin, the hydrology was computer-modeled and alternative solutions were analyzed to develop the optimum solution in terms of cost and effectiveness.

<sup>5</sup> York County Stormwater Advisory Committee web site, Frequently Asked Questions,



Water quality issues were also taken into consideration. The plan makes recommendations for on-site and regional solutions. The plan suggested that stormwater management systems serving multiple properties may be more effective for controlling the quality and quantity of stormwater runoff than individual structural BMPs for every parcel.

The following criteria, adopted by the Board of Supervisors in July 1997, determine the ranking of drainage improvement projects:

- Safety problems in the area
- Potential damage/poor drainage
- Frequency of problem
- Environmental impact
- Number of properties affected, and
- Size of area affected.

For new development, the County reviews subdivisions and site plans for compliance with state and County regulations. Stormwater management has evolved over the years from providing proper drainage for prevention of flooding to controlling both quantity and quality of flow to pre-development conditions. This is done through a variety of Best Management Practices (BMPs), including wet ponds, dry ponds, infiltration systems, porous pavement, and even grass swales. The qualitative aspects of drainage are especially important to Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas and properties in the Watershed Management and Protection overlay district.

~~Installation of stormwater retention and detention ponds is typically used to address management requirements.~~ Maintenance of these private stormwater ponds ~~—also known as Best Management Practices (BMPs)—~~ is becoming a significant issue as more and more such ponds are constructed in new residential subdivisions and commercial areas and turned over by the developer to homeowners' or property owners' associations that often do not have the resources or expertise to properly maintain them. To ensure the proper functioning of BMPs and prevent detrimental effects of surface water runoff on the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, the County should provide technical assistance to homeowners' and property owners' associations in the maintenance of stormwater management facilities. The ongoing public education efforts of the Stormwater Advisory Committee are useful in this regard, and the County should also continue to support the activities of this citizens committee.

County expenditures for water, wastewater, and stormwater facilities represent a significant public investment in improving the quality of our environment and the quality of life for County residents. A different approach that can yield similar benefits is for the County to fund the preservation of open space through conservation easements or fee simple purchase. Strongly supported by the citizens throughout the preparation of this plan, open space preservation ensures that property will not be developed and thus is probably the most effective way to prevent environmental degradation.

Growth affects the environment in ways not related to land development. The Hampton Roads Planning District Commission projects that the County's population growth will be accompanied by an additional 20,000 passenger cars and trucks in the next 25 years. Traffic growth will bring more highway noise and tailpipe emissions. As noted earlier, air pollution is closely monitored and regulated by the state for compliance with the Clean Air Act. Regions that receive Federal highway funding must demonstrate that their short- and long-term transportation improvements plans conform with air quality standards set forth by the EPA. In other words, a region cannot adopt a transportation plan that causes vehicle emissions to exceed the thresholds "budgeted" to that region by the EPA. The Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and Long-Range Regional Transportation Plan for Hampton Roads have been found to be in conformity. As traffic in Hampton Roads continues to grow, it will be increasingly important – to continue to receive Federal transportation funds and, more importantly, to protect the quality of the air we breathe – for the County to work with the rest of the region to ensure that transportation plans are

consistent with air quality goals. This will require greater emphasis on transit, carpooling, and ride sharing as well as bikeways and walkways. Land use planning strategies can also help, for example, through the incorporation of Traditional Neighborhood Design principles (discussed in more detail in the Housing element) that reduce vehicle miles of travel (VMT) by creating compactly designed mixed-used communities in which people can live, work, and recreate without ever getting into their cars.

As noted earlier, traffic causes noise pollution as well as air pollution. Noise walls are an increasingly prevalent attempt to address the issue of highway noise. However, recent research indicates that noise walls might not be as effective as is commonly believed.<sup>6</sup> One study of a noise wall found that significant noise reduction was limited to the area within 60 feet of the wall and that beyond 200 feet noise reduction is caused more by distance from the highway than by the wall itself. In addition, whatever noise benefits result from such walls must be balanced against the cost – estimated at \$20 per square foot or about \$40,000 per affected home – and the aesthetic impact, which can be severe. Technological solutions to the problem of highway noise – such as rubberized pavement, low-noise tires, and a high-tech option known as “noise cancellation”<sup>7</sup> – are also being studied.

In York County, the only likely candidate for noise walls is Interstate 64, where the planned widening will increase noise impacts on existing (Springfield Terrace, Queens Lake) and planned (Felgate’s Woods) residential development in the County. The best solution to the problem of highway noise is to implement appropriate land use controls to prevent residential development and other noise-sensitive uses along major freeways such as I-64, and in the future the County should discourage or prohibit such development to the extent possible.

## **GOAL, OBJECTIVES, AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

### **Goal**

Establish and preserve a balance between York County’s natural and built environment that contributes positively to the quality of life of current and future generations.

### **Objectives**

#### **GENERAL**

1. Preserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas and natural resources from the avoidable impacts of land use activities and development.
2. Enhance public awareness and understanding of the importance of environmental conservation and preservation.
3. Continue to implement special development regulations to protect natural resources areas, including low-lying areas, areas with steep slopes, tidal and nontidal wetlands, Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas, and areas identified by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage in the Natural Areas Inventory of the Lower Peninsula of Virginia.

4. Reduce danger to persons, property, and the environment caused by stormwater runoff from developed areas.

4.5. Reduce or eliminate the loss of life and property damage from natural hazards.

<sup>6</sup> Kim Sorvig, “A Sound Solution? Expressway noise walls can fix some community problems – while causing others.” Planning, April 2001, pp 10-15.

<sup>7</sup> Sorvig, p. 15.

## **AIR**

Achieve and maintain regional attainment with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

## **LAND**

1. Ensure that land development occurs in recognition of the ability of the land to support such development without environmental degradation.
2. Preserve open space for purposes of wildlife habitat and the preservation of ecologically sensitive areas.

## **WATER**

1. Ensure the conservation and enhancement of adequate and safe future water supply areas.
2. Reduce the incidence of failing septic systems.
- ~~2.3.~~ Ensure existing and proposed public and private access facilities (docks and piers) do not have a negative impact on water quality.
- ~~3.4.~~ Protect coastal wetlands, marshes, rivers, inlets and other bodies of water from degradation associated with land development.
- ~~4.5.~~ Protect shoreline property from erosion in a cost-effective manner that preserves and enhances shoreline resources, water quality, wetlands, riparian buffers, and wildlife habitat
- ~~5.6.~~ Minimize the need for streambank and shoreline erosion controls.

## **NOISE**

1. Limit noise associated with nonresidential development and highway traffic.
2. Promote compatible land use and development in areas where aircraft noise exceeds acceptable levels as determined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

## **WASTE MANAGEMENT**

1. Achieve a 50% recycling rate.
2. Provide for the convenient, efficient, and safe removal and disposal of leaves and yard debris.
3. Expand markets for recycled and recyclable products.

## **Implementation Strategies**

### **GENERAL**

1. Continue to require that development plans identify environmental constraints and opportunities and show how unavoidable environmental impacts will be mitigated.
2. Continue to require a natural resources inventory to identify environmentally sensitive areas and natural resources prior to any development.

3. Continue to implement the *Strategic Capital Plan for Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater*. |

3.4. Consider using public properties, such as parks and watershed areas, as living laboratories to educate school children about environmental conservation and preservation with such activities as nature hikes and observations, environmental experiments, wetlands delineation activities, etc. |

4.5. Collaborate with civic groups and community organizations on environmental restoration projects to encourage stewardship. |

5.6. Continue to support the Stormwater Advisory Committee and provide educational materials concerning environmental conservation and preservation. |

6.7. Encourage the School Division to provide a meaningful Bay or stream outdoor experience, such as a field trip, for public school students in accordance with the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement. |

**AIR**

1. Continue to support regional air quality initiatives through active participation in the Hampton Roads Air Quality Committee and the Interagency Consultation Group for Hampton Roads.
2. Continue to discourage the recruitment of industries that emit high levels of air pollutants.
3. Promote transportation modes and strategies that reduce the number of vehicle miles of travel (VMT) on the region's road network, including mass transit, HOV lanes, ride-sharing, bicycling, and walking.
4. Work with VDOT to identify and pursue regional funding (through the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program) for transportation improvements – such as intersection improvements, coordination of traffic signal systems, ITS projects, bikeways, and transit – that reduce auto emissions.
5. Continue to prohibit the open burning of leaves and yard debris in proximity to homes and other structures.
6. Pursue activities and strategies, including public education efforts, that decrease air pollutants within the Hampton Roads region.

**LAND**

1. Promote site design and land development that blends appropriately with natural features and terrain.
2. Retain natural physical features, forests, and woodland areas throughout the development process.
3. Maintain open space requirements within developing areas.
4. Maintain tree preservation and landscaping requirements for all new development.
5. Working with land conservancies, such as the Virginia Outdoors Foundation and the Williamsburg Land Conservancy, contribute funding for the purchase of conservation easements as a means of protecting and preserving areas with desirable or sensitive environmental or aesthetic qualities, especially shoreline, Resource Protection Areas and groundwater recharge areas.

## WATER

1. Identify potential sources of groundwater and surface water contamination and develop mitigation plans and procedures.
2. Seek grants to assist with the development and mapping of abandoned private wells and develop a program to require closure in accordance with Health Department regulations.
- 2.3. Monitor the septic tank pump-out program and pursue criminal penalties for non-compliance.
4. Continue to target public sewer extensions toward those developed areas where the soils cannot support septic systems.
5. Collaborate with the local Health Department to encourage alternative and new technologies for failing on-site septic systems for existing homes.
6. Support the upgrading of Hampton Roads Sanitation District wastewater facilities in accordance with the HRSD's adopted *Development Plan* and its annual *Facilities Management Plan* and *Capital Improvements Program*.
- 3.7. Continue enforcement of the requirements of the Watershed Management and Protection Area Overlay District including water quality and vegetative buffers to protect potable water reservoirs.
- 4.8. Support the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality's mandate to prevent destruction of non-tidal wetlands understanding they are important groundwater recharge areas.
- 5.9. Continue to require appropriate construction methods to control sedimentation, pollutant loading, and stormwater runoff, especially where development takes place in close proximity to water bodies.
- 6.10. Ensure that redevelopment of existing waterfront facilities will reduce non point source pollution and proposed shoreline access will address water quality issues consistent with the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act.
- 7.11. Encourage community piers and commonly owned shoreline open space in new waterfront housing developments.
- 8.12. Adopt policies to implement the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) Regional Shoreline Study.
- 9.13. Implement the guidelines in the Virginia Marine Resources Commission Shoreline Development BMPs Handbook for construction methods and siting criteria.
- 10.14. Consult the Marina Technical Advisory Program (MTAP), available through the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, on marina siting and design issues related to best management practices, water quality, and technical support for marinas.
- 11.15. Monitor and develop clean-up strategies for illicit discharges.
- 12.16. Continue the implementation of the re-inspection program of Best Management Practices.
- 13.17. Provide technical assistance as needed to homeowners' and property owners' associations in the proper maintenance of stormwater management facilities.

18. Encourage the development and use of regional retention and detention ponds in residential and commercial developments wherever possible.

14.19. Continue to enforce the conditions of the County's stormwater discharge permit in accordance with the NPDES Phase II program.

15.20. Develop and adopt a stormwater management ordinance with water quality requirements.

16.21. Continue to rigorously enforce the Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance to reduce sedimentation and degradation of surface waters.

17.22. Continue to participate in the York River Tributary Strategies effort as a means of improving water quality.

18.23. Reduce the non-point source pollutant loading from stormwater runoff on County projects and use indigenous and low-maintenance landscape materials.

20.24. Encourage property owners to utilize nonstructural erosion control measures, such as re-grading and re-vegetation, to address slight to moderate erosion and to utilize structural measures when erosion is severe and threatens property.

21.25. Encourage the coordination of shoreline erosion control measures among adjacent property owners.

22.26. Ensure that vegetative buffers are retained, enhanced, or established.

23.27. Ensure that drainage patterns are not altered to concentrate stormwater flow in erodible streams.

24.28. Encourage Low Impact Development and conservation design to reduce impacts to receiving downstream resources.

25.29. Ensure the provision of required buffers on all perennial streams.

## **NOISE**

1. Continue to employ Zoning Ordinance performance standards and other regulatory controls where applicable to minimize noise impacts of nonresidential uses on residential areas.
2. Consider the establishment of sound attenuation zoning, as provided for by Section 15.2-2295 of the *Code of Virginia*, to require installation of acoustical treatment measures in residential buildings and structures in areas within the aircraft approach zones for Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport where average noise exposure is 65 DNL or higher.
3. Discourage construction of schools and other noise-sensitive uses, such as hospitals and nursing homes, in areas within the aircraft approach zones for Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport where average noise exposure is 65 DNL or higher.
4. Consider incorporation of noise walls in the widening of Interstate 64.
5. To the maximum extent feasible, prevent construction of homes and other noise-sensitive uses in proximity to the Interstate 64 corridor.



# HISTORIC RESOURCES

## INTRODUCTION

York County and the surrounding region are rich in both historic archaeological and architectural resources, and preservation of these resources while maintaining appropriate opportunities for development is an ongoing challenge. For the benefit of both residents, commercial interests and developers, it is important to plan ahead for the identification and preservation of these resources, rather than having to respond in a reactive or haphazard manner after development is proposed. Responses to the telephone survey conducted pursuant to this Plan update indicate that preservation of historic sites and structures should be one of the County's top priorities, second only to protection of the natural environment in importance to County residents. The Historic Resources element contains a summary of efforts made thus far in the preservation of the County's historic resources as well as recommendations for future objectives and implementation strategies to further historic resource preservation goals.

## County History

The following summary is an update of the Historic Overview chapter of the 2000 *Historic Resources Survey of York County, Virginia*, prepared in conjunction with a matching grant from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and in coordination with the York County Planning Division.

At the time the first English colony was established at Jamestown in 1607, the region was occupied by Algonquin-speaking Powhatan Indians. These natives, whose subsistence was supported by agriculture supplemented by hunting, fishing and foraging, lived in settlements located along the major streams and rivers of the peninsula. It is estimated that over 13,000 Indians inhabited the coastal plain region of Virginia at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.

Initial amicable relations with the Indians during the first decade of English settlement declined as cultural differences and the English desire for increased land ownership created conflicts. The first English settlements in York County, Chiskiack and Fort York, were established in 1630 to provide a buffer between the existing settlements on the James River and the Indian settlements to the west. Development of these settlements included a palisade between the James and York Rivers, terminating at Chiskiack. In 1633, the fortification settlement was designated as a port of entry for Virginia. Several instances of open warfare between the English and Indians occurred during the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, and in 1677 a peace treaty was negotiated between the English and Powhatan nations.

In 1634, the Virginia Assembly organized the Virginia colony into eight shires, or counties, one of which was Charles River Shire (named for King Charles I). In 1643, the name of Charles River Shire was changed to York County (named for James, Duke of York and second son of King Charles I). As the population grew along the York River and new settlements developed, the Counties of Gloucester (1653) and New Kent (1654) were divided out of York County lands, and a portion of the western part of the County was ceded to James City County. York County is the only county on the James-York peninsula with intact court records to this period. The majority of the middle peninsula town and county records were destroyed during the Civil War.

By 1640, the majority of the land east of the palisade had been developed, and by the 1650's, York County was integrated into the plantation system of tobacco cultivation, the main agricultural crop that dominated the economy of the region up until the time of the Civil War. The institution of slavery developed along with the tobacco economy of the region, and York County's initial settlers brought Africans with them to work their plantations as early as the 1630s.



Yorktown was created by the Virginia Assembly in 1691, and during the first half of the eighteenth century the town was the principal port for the tobacco and slave trades serving the Virginia coastal plain region. After 1750, the tobacco trade fell into decline because of drought, depletion of the soil from the nutrient-demanding crop, and the shift of shipping operations to more northerly ports such as Fredericksburg.

During the 1760's and 1770's, wheat and grain crops, livestock, and forestry products replaced tobacco as the County's economic base. Tobacco cultivation required a large work force on a year-round basis, while producing these commodities needed a smaller work force during a seasonal time frame. As a result, many African-Americans were sold to plantations in the deep south during this time period.

The Revolutionary War brought great hardship to the County. Much of Yorktown was destroyed, and the country surrounding it was damaged and ransacked by both Colonial and English militia. Yorktown is most noted as the site of the 1781 surrender by Lord Cornwallis to the American, German, and French forces under General George Washington and the Comte de Rochambeau.

The County remained rural and agricultural in nature through the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The economy was slow during the early part of the century, and little industry was developed. Industrial census figures from this period indicate several gristmills on the larger streams, such as Burwell's Mill (aka Whittaker's Mill) at King's Creek Plantation, and numerous looms for the manufacture of linen and wool textiles. According to the 1850 Census, the County population comprised 1,825 whites, 2,181 African-American slaves and 454 free African-Americans. Almost half of the households in the County listed farming as their principal occupation. Oystering and fishing ranked second to farming as an occupation. Other occupations included storekeepers, retail merchants, carpenters, bricklayers, lawyers, physicians, and clergymen.

The Civil War devastated much of the County. There were several battles fought in and around the County, and in 1862, Yorktown, while occupied by Confederate troops, was held under siege by Union forces. By 1865, numerous farms had been abandoned, and grain and livestock production fell dramatically. With the emancipation of African-American slaves, the plantation system of agriculture ceased to exist. The County, like much of the country, fell into an economic depression, from which it was slow to recover. Many of the large plantations were divided into smaller parcels and sold, leased or worked on shares.

By the last quarter of the century, the number of farms in the County increased, while their average size decreased. The 1870 Census indicates that more than two-thirds of the farms in the County contained less than 20 acres. This Census also indicates that only seven manufacturing business existed in the County, including a sawmill and two flour mills, and only 36 people were employed in manufacturing.

The trend of decreasing farm size continued into the early twentieth century. A total of 960 farms were reported in the 1910 Census, more than 80% of which were owner occupied. Grain crops continued to be the primary agriculture product, with livestock, poultry, hay, sorghum, potatoes and peanuts also being produced. This Census reported no manufacturing businesses in the County.

A noticeable change in the development of the County was the establishment of several village centers. The villages were typically located at a crossroads containing a post office, school or church, store, and a few dwellings. The remnants of these communities exist today in Dare, Tabb, Seaford, Yorkville, Hornsbyville, [Harris Grove](#), Dandy, Grove, Lackey, Magruder and Skimino.

During the first half of the twentieth century, industrial and military development greatly changed development patterns in the County. Just prior to World War I, the DuPont Corporation

purchased 4,000 acres of farmland on the York River for a dynamite plant and constructed the town of Penniman to house its workers. Before the plant went into production, the Federal Government took over the facility, now known as Cheatham Annex, and developed a shell-loading plant. At the end of the war, the plant was closed and the town of Penniman disappeared. Today the Penniman Road name is all that remains of the original residential development, and the military installation is used as a supply depot. In 1917, the Navy purchased 12,000 acres of land west of Yorktown and established the Naval Weapons Station. The Atlantic Fleet was based in Yorktown during the war, and the regional fuel oil depot serving the Navy was located on the present-day site of the U.S. Coast Guard Training Center. The Federal Government established Camp Peary in 1942 on the York River between Kings Creek and Queens Creek as a Navy training facility for construction battalions. The facility was used as a prisoner-of-war camp during World War II, and many prisoners worked on farms in the area during their internment. The facility continues today as an armed forces experimental training facility. Areas not affected by military activities remained rural in nature during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and farming and shellfish continued to be the main basis of the County's economy. Cash crops included corn, soybeans, truck crops, oysters, crabs and scallops.

Following World War II, the County experienced rapid suburban development. Military bases in the County and in Newport News (Fort Eustis) and Hampton (Langley Air Force Base) used during the war became permanent installations, and personnel stationed at the facilities added to the area population. In addition to housing military personnel, York County has also become a bedroom community for employees of the private sector in Newport News and Hampton. Suburban development is currently concentrated in the southern and eastern parts of the County. Another factor contributing to rapid suburban growth has been the construction of Interstate 64, where development has concentrated at its major interchanges. Development of the Dominion Virginia Power facility and the Giant Industries petroleum refinery on the Goodwin Neck peninsula greatly increased tax revenues for the County. Today, the economy of the County is primarily oriented toward the retail, service, and tourism industries.

## **EXISTING RESOURCES**

Historical resources are classified as “above ground” or architectural, and “below ground” or archaeological. Architectural resources can include dwellings, non-residential buildings, outbuildings, wharves, monuments, bridges, or earthworks. Archaeological resources can include remains of hearths, weapons, tools, trash pits, pottery, utensils, human or animal remains, wells, building foundations, or fence lines. York County has a wealth of both types of resources.

One of the first comprehensive reports identifying historical resources for York County as well as Williamsburg and James City County and giving recommendations for their preservation was the 1986 report, “Toward a Resource Protection Process,” prepared by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (CWF) Department of Archaeological Research with grant monies from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR). This report was updated in 1990 and is the current reference document for the County Zoning Ordinance Historic Resources Management overlay district. Information and research sources for the majority of sites identified in the report come primarily from archives and reports held by the VDHR. Updates to the VHDR archives are made continuously, and many more sites have been identified and cataloged since publication of the 1990 report, which listed a total of 71 architectural sites and 536 archaeological sites in the County.

In June 2000 the report “Historic Resources Survey of York County, Virginia” was completed by the County utilizing matching grant funds from the VHDR. The report consists of an architectural survey of the standing historic buildings (over 50 years of age) in the County, exclusive of land owned by the Federal Government (attached as Appendix A). The report also contains an evaluation of specific buildings having merit for preservation as well as

recommendations for future historic preservation actions by the County. All buildings surveyed were reported to VDHR and their recorded information is included in the VHDR archives. Cultural resource surveys and reports have been completed on Federally-owned land in the County by military agencies and the National Park Service, and report data is contained within VDHR archives.

Current VHDR records list 367 architectural and 1,003 archaeological sites within the County. [A listing and map of the architectural sites is contained in Appendix A.](#) Of those sites, the following are listed on the Virginia Landmark Register (VLR) and the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

- The Old Custom House, Main Street, Yorktown

This two-story brick storehouse was built in 1720 by Richard Ambler, custom collector, and served in the early-to-mid seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as one of the oldest Colonial customhouses. Because of Yorktown's importance in the tobacco trade, the Custom House may well have been the best known public building of its day in Virginia after the Capitol and Governor's Palace in Williamsburg. In 1865, the building was commandeered by Civil War Confederate General John Magruder for use as his headquarters. In 1882 the building was sold to an African-American physician, Dr. D.M. McNorton, who used the building for his office. A school for black children was held on the second floor landing, and Dr. McNorton's daughter taught music there.



*Old Custom House*

source: National Park Service

- Grace Church, Main Street, Yorktown

In November 1696, Governor Francis Nicholson pledged 20 pounds sterling for the construction of a church in Yorktown, and in 1697, the York-Hampton Parish Church was built on Main Street. The church is one of the few surviving colonial structures built of marl. During the Revolutionary War, Lord Cornwallis used the church as a magazine. Following destruction from fire in 1814, the church was reconstructed in 1848 and its name changed to Grace Church. During the Civil War, the building was used as a hospital.

- Kiskiack, or Lee House, Naval Weapons Station

This is a brick farmhouse built during the late seventeenth century. Henry Lee obtained a patent for the property in 1641. Lee served as a justice for the Court of York and was a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses.

- Sessions-Pope-Sheild House, Main Street, Yorktown

This one-and-a-half story brick dwelling is considered one of the finest examples of mid-eighteenth century colonial architecture. The building has remained intact for close to 300 years. During the Civil War, the building served as headquarters for Union General Henry M. Naglee following the abandonment of the town by the Confederates. The property has

York County is home to several museums providing exhibits and programs interpreting the County's history from prehistoric times to the present day.



*Timeline Kiosk at Yorktown Victory Center*

The Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation operates the Yorktown Victory Center, located on Water Street near the Yorktown Battlefield. The facility, established in 1976, maintains a historical focus of the period leading up to the American Revolution through the adoption of the Constitution and Bill of Rights at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Outdoor exhibits include a walking path with timeline exhibit, a recreated 1780s farm, and a Continental Army encampment. Indoor facilities include exhibition galleries with dioramas highlighting the roles of people on both sides of the Revolutionary War conflict, exhibits documenting Yorktown's history as a commercial port, and a theater showing interpretive films describing Yorktown and its role during the Revolutionary War period.

The York County Historical Museum is located in York Hall on Main Street in the center of the Yorktown village historical area. The museum contains artifacts, educational information and exhibits about York County's past including information about Native American tools, Colonial Yorktown, Revolutionary and Civil War periods, and the 20th Century.

The Watermen's Museum, located on the York River in the historic village area of Yorktown, was founded in 1981 for the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Yorktown. The museum interprets the history of the men and women in the fishing industry of the Chesapeake Bay, from the time of Indian settlements to the present day.

The National Park Service owns and maintains the Colonial National Historical Park, which includes a visitor center at the edge of the historic Yorktown area, the Yorktown Battlefield and the Colonial Parkway. The visitor center offers visitor orientation films, lectures, and exhibits focusing on the 1781 Siege of Yorktown. The Battlefield includes auto tour roads with interpretive signage recounting the events and important places associated with the Siege.

The County has several historical highway markers installed under the VHDR Historical Marker Program. Participation in the program is a valuable means to help educate the public on state history as well as promote tourism. Any person or organization can submit a proposal for a highway marker. To qualify for a state historical marker, a person, place, event, or institution must have state or national historical significance attained 50 or more years in the past. The Virginia Department of Transportation retains responsibility for the installation of new markers and the maintenance of existing ones. Currently, York County has historical markers displaying the following information:

- [Patrick Napier, Colonial Surgeon – Merrimac Trail, Williamsburg](#)

["Nearby lived "Patrick Napier of Queens Creek in the County of Yorke chirurgion," one of the earliest surgeons of Scottish descent in Virginia. Born about 1634, and apprenticed to the surgeon general of the Scottish army defeated by Cromwell in 1650, Patrick Napier](#)



arrived here before 1655. He married Elizabeth, a daughter of Robert Booth, Clerk of York County Court and a member of the House of Burgesses. By horse and boat, Napier attended the sick, performed surgery, and bled his patients, and dispensed various remedies consistent with the practice of medicine in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. He died in 1669. He was the progenitor of most of the Napiers in America."

- Vineyard Tract - Penniman Road, Williamsburg

"Here was an experimental farm for the culture of grapes established by the Virginia government in 1769. On this tract stood a hospital of the French-American army in 1781."

- Whittaker's House - Pocahontas Trail, Williamsburg

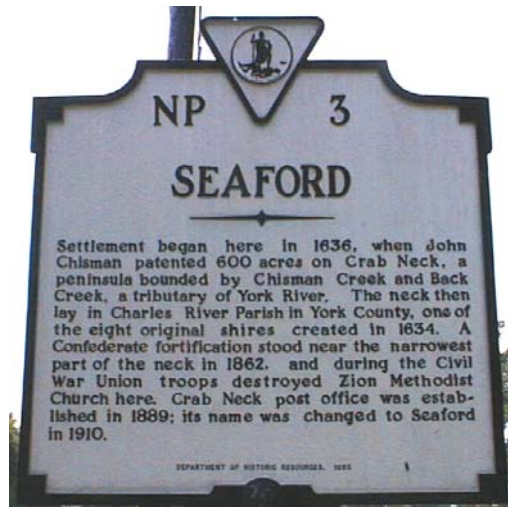
"A mile north fo the road is Whittaker's House, headquarters of General W.F. Smith, Battle of Williamsburg, May 5, 1862."

- Charles Church - Hampton Highway and GW Memorial Highway, Tabb

"About one mile east, on north (left-hand) side of road (see stone marker and old foundations) stood the last colonial church of Charles Parish, built about 1709 and burned a century later on the site of two earlier churches of the Parish, built about 1636 and 1692. This Parish was first known as New Poquoson Parish in 1692 and was renamed Charles Parish in 1692."

- Seaford - Seaford Road, Seaford

"Settlement began here in 1636, when John Chisman patented 600 acres on Crab Neck, a peninsula bounded by Chisman Creek and Back Creek, a tributary of York River. The neck than lay in Charles River Parish in York County, one of the eight original shires created in 1634. A Confederate fortification stood near the narrowest part of the neck until 1862, and during the Civil War Union troops destroyed Zion Methodist Church here. Crab Neck post office was established in 1889; its name was changed to Seaford in 1910."



- Goodwin Neck - Goodwin Neck Road, Seaford

"This area, locally known as Dandy, was part of the land granted by John Chew July 6, 1636, and was sold by his heirs to James Goodwin, a member of the House of Burgesses from Jamestown, August 27, 1668. The area was strategically important to British General Charles Cornwallis and to Confederate General John B. Magruder, who erected earth redoubts at the head of several creeks on Goodwin Neck."

- York County – George Washington Memorial Highway (Route 17) at the Newport News line

"One of the eight original shires formed in 1634. First called Charles River, which was named for King Charles I. The name was changed in 1643 to York for Yorkshire, England. Cornwallis's surrender, October 19, 1781 took place at Yorktown."

## GOAL, OBJECTIVES, AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

### Goal

Identify, preserve, protect, and enhance the County's existing and future historical resources.

### Objectives

1. Update inventories of known archaeological and architectural resources on a regular basis.
2. Continue efforts to coordinate the sharing of information (as through VDHR) as inventories are conducted on the large percentage of the County's riverfront property, especially rich in historic resources, that is owned by the Federal Government.
3. Increased attention should be given to the documentation, inventory and evaluation of African-American resources.
4. Initiate a regional survey and evaluation study of mill sites, particularly those that played an important role in the maintenance of the historic plantation system.
5. Explore funding options for preservation activities.
6. Consider establishment of historic or neighborhood protection districts in historically significant communities.
7. Maintain a local historic archives repository.
8. Promote public education and awareness of County historic resources for persons of all ages. Utilize these resources for the educational, civic, and economic benefit of the County and its citizens.
9. Participate in the Virginia Historic Landmarks and National Register of Historic Places programs.
10. As was done with architectural resources, complete a comprehensive archaeological resources inventory to identify archaeologically sensitive areas of the County.
11. Promote heritage tourism in the County.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Combine open/green space preservation with preservation of historic resources where feasible.
2. Utilize current VHDR databases and archives in reviewing and evaluating development proposals, especially in context of the Historic Resources Management overlay zoning district.
3. Require a survey and evaluation report of all known historic sites in conjunction with the submission of all subdivision plans, site plans, and rezoning and special use permit applications that include a conceptual development plan, said evaluation to be prepared in accordance with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources *Guidelines for Conducting Cultural Resource Survey in Virginia*, and require protection of resources deemed significant throughout the development process.

Williamsburg-Jamestown Airport in James City County, which serves some of the general aviation needs of the Williamsburg area.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) recommends that an airport begin planning for additional runway capacity when it reaches 60% of its operational capacity and undertake construction when it reaches 80%. This approach ensures that the need for improvements to an airport is dictated by demand and not by optimistic expectations that might or might not be realistic. With almost 228,000 aircraft operations (takeoffs and landings) in 2004, Newport News/Williamsburg Airport is already operating *above* its Annual Service Volume (i.e., capacity) of 219,000.<sup>1</sup>

The PAC adopted an *Airport Master Plan* in 1997 that calls for the ultimate extension of both existing runways and construction of a third (shown in yellow in the figure below) in order to accommodate projected growth in operations. Under this scenario, according to the *Airport Master Plan*, a large segment of Oriana Road would be relocated to accommodate the runway extensions. While such a configuration would extend the runways closer to populated areas of York County, the airport expansion is expected to *reduce* the noise problem experienced by County residents who live in the path of an airport runway. This is predicated on an assumed shift in the fleet mix away from louder military aircraft as well as the FAA-mandated phase-out of older planes with louder engines. Norfolk International Airport also has plans to add a new runway to accommodate growth in operations.

~~An The future role of Newport News/Williamsburg Airport is addressed in the Eastern Virginia Airport System Study, which the purpose of which was to identify a system of airports that would best meet the air transportation needs of the greater eastern Virginia region encompassing the combined market area of the three airports, was completed in 2001. recently undertaken by a group of public and private entities in the Hampton Roads and Richmond regions. The purpose of this study was to identify a system of airports that would best meet the air transportation needs of the greater eastern Virginia region, which encompasses the combined market area of the three airports. Completed in 2001, the study concluded that a two-airport system, consisting of Richmond International Airport and recommended construction of~~



~~a new airport in the Isle of Wight County area, by 2030 is the best long-term strategy for maintaining the region's economic competitiveness and providing citizens with efficient and convenient air service. In so doing, the study states that neither Newport News/Williamsburg nor Norfolk International Airports can accommodate the major expansion necessary to provide improved international flight capabilities. As stated in the 2003 Virginia Air Transportation System Plan Update, "The existing airports have served their communities well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, airfield limitations, residential encroachment, urban sprawl, major road congestion, and the overall geographic location of those two airports point toward constructing a new airport to serve the region's demands throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century."~~<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that construction of a new regional air "super-port," if it occurs, probably would not take place before 2030 and would not preclude the expansion of the Newport News airport to accommodate existing and projected future operations. In fact, the Newport News airport will need to be expanded whether or not a "super-port" is built.

<sup>1</sup> Virginia Department of Aviation, *Virginia Air Transportation System Plan Update, 2003 Technical Report*, p. 72

<sup>2</sup> 2003 VATSP Update – Technical Report, p. 137



build such a road would require approval from the Commonwealth Transportation Board and the Federal Highway Administration.

- A connecting road between Hornsbyville Road and the proposed Fort Eustis Boulevard extension from Old York-Hampton Highway to Seaford Road would enable residents of Hornsbyville Road and the Waterview area to easily and directly access Fort Eustis Boulevard and Interstate 64 and prevent them from “cutting through” residential areas on subdivision streets not designed or intended for such traffic.
- Extension of Independence Boulevard (the entrance road into the Lakewood Village development now under construction on Denbigh Boulevard) to Richneck Road would provide a road connecting between Denbigh Boulevard and Ft. Eustis Boulevard. The proposed road extension is consistent with the Newport News comprehensive plan, which recommends a “Denbigh/Ft. Eustis Connector” between Denbigh Boulevard and Ft. Eustis Boulevard in York County.
- The planned expansion of Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport will require the realignment of a segment of Oriana Road or, alternatively, a runway bridge over the road. Any realignment should be limited to the segment between Harwoods Mill Reservoir and Denbigh Boulevard, where it should tie into the planned signalized intersection of Denbigh Boulevard and Independence Boulevard. With the possible extension of Independence Boulevard to Richneck Road (discussed above), this would provide for a continuous corridor from Route 17 to Ft. Eustis Boulevard, which could divert significant amounts of traffic off both of these congested highways.
- If environmentally feasible, a road connection in the undeveloped area between ~~Glaxton Creek~~Shirley Road and Seaford Road in Seaford would provide a secondary means of access to the Back Creek area, which contains numerous residences as well as water-oriented commercial/industrial uses (e.g. Seaford Scallop) that generate significant truck traffic that existing roads were not adequately designed to accommodate. Development in this area may be precluded by wetlands or other environmental factors; however, any construction that is permitted should be required to reserve the right-of-way for such a connecting road and have its lots arranged and internal streets designed to accommodate it.
- Sight distance improvements are needed at the intersection of Burts Road and Oriana Road.
- Extension of the Whispering Pines subdivision street network (Whispering Way and Beach Road) in Grafton to interconnect with Yorkville Road would provide a second means of access to the Piney Point area, which currently is served only by Yorkville Road. The capacity and safety of Yorkville Road are limited by its narrow pavement width (narrower than the streets in Whispering Pines, both of which are platted as “stub” streets intended for extension to adjacent properties when they develop), which could be addressed by widening the pavement. However, a widening project would not address the lack of secondary access. Alternatively, a connecting road linking Yorkville Road with Charles Road could be considered if environmentally feasible; however, the presence of significant jurisdictional wetlands in the area between these two roads may preclude such a road. Any future development of the property ~~west-of-around~~ Whispering Pines should be designed to interconnect with the Whispering Pines streets to provide a road connection to Yorkville Road, but to have that connection designed and routed in such as way as to not encourage its use as a primary access route to the Piney Point area. In addition, any interconnection between Yorkville and Charles Roads must be evaluated in terms of its impact on Charles Road, which is narrow and of limited capacity.

- Extension of Commonwealth Drive to provide a link between Commonwealth Drive and Route 17 at its signalized intersection with Coventry Boulevard would greatly improve access to one of the County's Economic Development Priority Areas. A future road corridor should be reserved through this area, and any development therein should be required to have its internal street system designed accordingly and to construct appropriate segments of the connector. Any such road should be somewhat circuitous and perhaps incorporate appropriate traffic-calming design features so as not to encourage cut-through traffic through the Coventry/Tabb Lakes/York Meadows/Patriot Village area.

There are a number of older secondary roads in the County that are not wide enough to safely accommodate the amount of traffic they carry. Many of them lack paved shoulders. When development is proposed along such substandard roads, the County requires the developer to dedicate half of the right-of-way deficiency for future road widening, but it is extremely unlikely that there will be enough secondary road funds to widen all or even a significant number of these roads in the next 20 years. These are roads that would benefit greatly from a minor shoulder widening and spot improvements that could be done as part of a rehabilitation and repaving project (ditches, paved shoulders [for bikes], right-turn wedges/tapers). This approach, which was successfully utilized to improve a segment of Seaford Road in 2004, is a simpler and less costly alternative that can be implemented much more expeditiously than a full-scale widening project. The roadway segments listed in **Table 4** below are good candidates for this type of maintenance project and a system for evaluating and ranking them as to priority should be developed and kept up-to-date as a part of the annual review of the Secondary System Six-Year Plan.

<b>Proposed Secondary Road Rehabilitation/Repaving Projects</b>			
<b>Route No.</b>	<b>Route Name</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>
655	Allens Mill Road*	Dare Road	Wolftrap Road
718/626	Back Creek Road/Shirley Road	Seaford Road	Dead end
718	Back Creek Road*	Seaford Road	Goodwin Neck Road
660	Baptist Road	Route 238	Spring Road
604	Barlow Road*	Newman Road	Skimino Road
604	Barlow Road*	Skimino Road	East Rochambeau Dr.
718	Battle Road	Route 17	Old York-Hampton Hwy
600	Big Bethel Road	Route 134	Route 171
709	Burts Road*	Oriana Road	Grafton Dr connector
606	Calthrop Neck Road	Route 171	Dead end
782	Cary's Chapel Road	Route 171	Poquoson city line
615	Charles Road	Yorkville Road	Dead end
629	Dandy Loop Road	Goodwin Neck Road	Goodwin Neck Road
613	Darby Road*	Route 17	Dead end
620	Dare Road	Dare Elementary	Lakeside Drive
620	Dare Road	Lakeside Drive	Link Road
659	Dogwood Road	Route 238	Dead end
602	Fenton Mill Road*	Newman Road	JCCo line
238	Goosley Road	Crawford Road	Route 17
718	Hornsbyville Road*	Old York-Hampton Hwy	Goodwin Neck Rd
716	Hubbard Ln/West Queens Dr	Sheppard Drive	Queens Lake Mid. School
1314	Lakeshead Drive*	Hubbard Lane	New Quarter Park
646	Lightfoot Road	Route 60	Rochambeau Drive
679	Lindsay Landing Lane	Showalter	Dead end
620	Link Road	Dare Road	Railway Road
603	Mooretown Road*	Airport Road	Old Mooretown Road
646	Newman Road*	Fenton Mill Road	James City County line
792/1514	Old Lakeside Dr/Whispering Pine Dr	Lakeside Drive	Fielding Lewis Drive
603	Old Mooretown Road	Mooretown Road	Route 60 overpass

County to pay as little as 20% of the total project cost. Finally, ensuring that developers install bike and pedestrian facilities along designated routes as a condition of development approval requires no initial County expenditures and lessens the ultimate cost of providing complete, interconnected linkages.

A common distinction in bikeway planning is between transportation and recreational routes. The *Regional Bikeway Plan* attempts to address both but is still principally a transportation-oriented plan. The County should consider recreational routes in planning park facilities as well as in the review of large residential developments. It is especially important that bikeways connect residential, commercial, and recreational areas, and community facilities such as schools, libraries, and athletic fields. In any case, bicycle facilities should be connected and integrated to form a comprehensive bikeway system.

Traffic growth will not be limited to the surface transportation system. Steady growth in passenger activity at Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport, which has averaged more than 10% a year for the past ten years and over 15% annually for the past five years, is stretching the airport beyond its capacity. While it is impossible to predict whether or not demand will ever be sufficient to warrant the ultimate three-runway configuration favored by the Peninsula Airport Commission, it seems clear that some type of expansion will be necessary. The Norfolk and Richmond airports will become increasingly impractical and inconvenient for York County residents as traffic in the region grows and Interstate 64 congestion increases. ~~The proposal to build a regional "super-port" on a rural site in or near Isle of Wight County is predicated on the assumption that funds will be available to build such a facility as well as the access roads and other supporting infrastructure that would be needed. Whether or not the facility could be built, the more important question is if it should be built. The proposed site also~~ would not be convenient for York County residents and ~~it~~ would dilute the economic benefits of the Newport News airport, which, according to a recent study, generates an estimated 2,459 jobs, \$55.5 million in wages, and \$148.1 million in annual economic activity.<sup>16</sup> Although the direct on-airport benefits accrue to the city of Newport News, it is likely that many of the off-airport impacts – including hotels, retail and restaurants, tourist destinations, and travel agents – are felt in York County. The growing hotel demand along the Route 171 corridor in both York County and Newport News is probably at least partly attributable to the proximity of the airport and the Oyster Point office development.

The *Airport Master Plan* for Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport calls for the extension of both existing runways and construction of a new parallel runway, to be built in phases in accordance with demand. The first of these three projects is the proposed extension of Runway 2-20 from 6,525' to 8,000', which would enable the airport to use both existing runways for its critical aircraft in peak travel times. Extension of this runway would require the relocation of Oriana Road; alternatively, the runway could bridge over the road. Approximately 25 developed properties in the Kentucky Heights area along Oriana Road would have to be purchased by the Peninsula Airport Commission. Otherwise, the area affected by such an extension would be limited to undeveloped Newport News Waterworks property. Noise impacts on County residents, therefore, would be negligible. A phased expansion, focusing first on adding runway capacity where it will have the least impact on County residents, is a sensible approach that will allow the noise impacts to be reevaluated to determine whether or not the master plan's projections prove to be accurate. If not, further expansion should not be supported.

## **GOAL, OBJECTIVES, AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

### **Goal**

Provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods within York County and throughout the Hampton Roads region.

---

<sup>16</sup> Virginia Department of Aviation, *Final Technical Report, 2004 Virginia Airport System Economic Impact Study* (April 2004)

***Draft - September 7, 2005***

identify possible ways to facilitate consolidation and elimination of access points to reduce conflicts.

8. Continue to support the Williamsburg Area Transport system and its expansion in the upper County and historic Yorktown.
9. Work with local and regional transit agencies to develop transit services for the elderly.
10. Support the development of enhanced rail service on the Peninsula including a regional light rail system running from Williamsburg to the lower Peninsula and higher speed rail service along the CSX corridor.
11. Encourage residential development patterns that provide direct driveway access from individual units to local streets and not to collector and arterial roadways.
12. Continue to require the interconnection of subdivision street systems for use by bicyclists, pedestrians, emergency vehicles, and – where such interconnection will not encourage “cut-through” traffic by people living outside the subdivisions – automobiles. In some cases where vehicular interconnections are provided, appropriate traffic-calming measures should be incorporated into the initial development design and street construction to reduce the potential for “cut-through” traffic.
13. Continue to lobby the General Assembly for stronger laws promoting traffic safety, with special emphasis on the “Photo Red” program, which should be reinstated and authorized in York County.
14. Promote and support the work of the Transportation Safety Commission.
15. Continue to provide County-funded law enforcement positions used in traffic law enforcement operations.
16. Work with the Transportation Safety Commission, the Sheriff's Office, VDOT, and the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission to improve traffic crash data collection and analysis for the purpose of identifying dangerous locations on the County's road network and developing strategies – through engineering, education, and enforcement – for improving traffic safety in these locations.
17. Integrate bikeway and sidewalk development into County road construction, reconstruction, and widening projects in accordance with the VDOT *Policy for Integrating Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations*.
18. Review and if necessary enhance the street lighting installation and service program to consider not only traffic but safety and security.
19. Continue to set aside funds annually through the CIP for the construction of bikeway and sidewalk projects in critical locations.
20. Review County development ordinances to identify opportunities to require sidewalks in more instances within residential neighborhoods and between residential neighborhoods and each other and nearby recreational areas, community facilities, and commercial establishments.
21. Support the expansion of runway capacity at Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport in a manner that reduces noise impacts on existing County residential areas.
22. Promote Yorktown as both an origination point and port-of-call for small passenger cruise ship operations.

# LAND USE

## INTRODUCTION

The Land Use element is perhaps the element of the *Comprehensive Plan* with which citizens are most familiar. It describes the distribution of existing land uses and the potential for future development and also identifies the policies that will guide the arrangement and intensity of future additions or changes to existing land use patterns. While residential densities and use characteristics are generally described in the Land Use element, specific standards, such as minimum lot sizes and permitted uses, are set forth in the County's Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map.

Of the 108 square miles contained within the County's jurisdictional limits (a figure that includes the bodies of water within the jurisdictional limits), approximately 37% of the total land area is owned by the Federal government. These Federal landholdings include the various military installations – the U.S. Coast Guard Training Center, U.S. Naval Weapons Station, Cheatham Annex, and Camp Peary – which total approximately 20,400 acres, and the 3,900-acre Colonial National Historical Park. In addition to these large Federal landholdings, the Cities of Newport News and Williamsburg each own reservoirs and watershed property in the County encompassing a total of 6,600 acres. The combination of Federal and watershed property accounts for 30,900 acres, representing almost half (47.5%) of the land area in York County. While presenting a number of constraints for the County, these landholdings do ensure that a relatively large amount of open space will be perpetuated, thus contributing positively to the County's quality of life and the perception of a rural atmosphere.

## EXISTING LAND USE

The process of creating a vision for the future begins with an analysis of existing conditions. The distribution of land uses throughout the County is shown on the 2005 Existing Land Use Map and is summarized in **Table 1**. In these discussions, *gross area* includes all of the land area in the County, whereas *gross developable land area* excludes both military and recreation/conservation land. The description of land as “developable” in this context means that the land is *available* for development (or redevelopment) and not necessarily that it *can* feasibly be developed. Indeed, much of this land has environmental or other constraints that may limit or even preclude development. Gross developable land area is 44% of the County's gross land area and includes both already developed and vacant land.

YORK COUNTY EXISTING LAND USE, 2005		
Land Use Category	Acres	Percent
Single-Family Residential	11,268	17.2%
Multi-Family Residential	730	1.1%
<b>Residential Total</b>	<b>11,998</b>	<b>18.3%</b>
Commercial	901	1.4%
Tourist Commercial	591	0.9%
<b>Commercial Total</b>	<b>1,492</b>	<b>2.3%</b>
Limited Industrial	412	0.6%
General Industrial	1,253	1.9%
<b>Industrial Total</b>	<b>1,665</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
Military	20,912	31.8%
Public/Institutional	1,128	1.7%
Conservation/Recreation	16,413	25.0%
Agricultural	677	1.0%
Vacant	11,152	17.0%
<b>Open Space Total</b>	<b>28,242</b>	<b>43.0%</b>
Right-of-Way	140	0.2%
None	85	0.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>65,662</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### Residential

Table 1

Residential development occupies about 12,000 acres. Although this figure may seem low for a suburban “bedroom community” of almost 66,000 acres, it represents 42.34% of the County's gross developable land area (excluding military installations and conservation/recreation land)



and 70.7% of the County's developed non-military land area. The vast majority of the residentially developed land in the County (94%) is dedicated to single-family detached housing.

Low-density residential development is typically found along the County's extensive shoreline (approximately 200 miles) and in other areas where development constraints – such as environmentally sensitive areas, lack of public utilities, poor access, etc. – limit the capacity of the land to support denser development, while medium- and high-density single-family uses are generally located in areas where public utilities and convenient access to major thoroughfares are available. Even though the designations of "medium" and "high" denote smaller lots, the conventional development lot sizes permitted in these areas are somewhat larger than the "medium" and "high" density lots in other localities. However, since the early 1990s, the predominant trend in single family detached residential development has been the use of the "cluster" or "open space subdivision" development technique where lots are smaller but the total number allowed is no more than would be permitted under conventional subdivision practices.

Multi-family residential development includes townhouses, duplexes, quadruplexes, and other multiplex units, as well as apartments, and mobile home parks. This category does not include the 450-acre Bethel Manor military housing complex, which is included in the Military category. The ~~720-730~~ acres of multi-family residential development represents 1.1% of the County's land area and 6.0% of the residentially developed land area.

### **Commercial**

Commercial uses occupy approximately 1,500 acres in the County. In the lower County, commercial development is concentrated along Route 17, which is the County's main commercial corridor, and the Victory Boulevard (Route 171) corridor between Route 17 and the Newport News city line, which is centrally located to the entire Peninsula and, with the development of the Village Square (Super Kmart) Shopping Center, Cybernetics, the First Advantage Credit Union office building, Wal-Mart, and various hotels and restaurants, has experienced a significant transformation in the past ten years.

In the upper County, the Lightfoot area has emerged as a major retail destination for the greater Williamsburg area. The completion of the segment of Route 199 between Interstate 64 and Route 60, coupled with the extension of Mooretown Road to a full interchange at Route 199, have created a major commercial node encompassing the Mooretown Road and Route 199/East Rochambeau Drive corridors. The County has developed a water system to serve the area and sewer service is also available. Other commercial corridors in the upper County are Route 143 (Merrimac Trail), Mooretown Road, Bypass Road (Route 60), and portions of Pocahontas Trail and Richmond Road.

Almost 40% of the commercial development in the County is classified as Tourist Commercial, which includes hotels, motels, timeshare resorts, and other uses oriented primarily to the tourist market. There are a few tourist commercial activities in the Yorktown area as well as several motels along Route 17; however, the latter facilities tend to serve a transient business market rather than a tourist market in most cases. These tourist commercial activities are concentrated in the Williamsburg market area, particularly along the Bypass Road corridor, with its many motels, restaurants, and timeshares, and the Route 199/Penniman Road corridor where Water Country USA and the Kings Creek Plantation timeshare resort are located.

There are also various neighborhood-oriented businesses that serve the day-to-day needs of nearby residents. These are generally termed convenience activities since their business depends more on the convenience of the establishment to the shopper than to any comparative advantage over other establishments offering similar products. In York County, neighborhood commercial activities are generally located in the centers of the older, well-established residential areas such as Lackey, Seaford, Dare, and Penniman Road. This category also includes water-related activities that have historically held a very important position in York

County's commercial base. Included under this category of commercial activities are the marinas as well as several boat-building operations and seafood businesses located in the Dare, Seaford, Dandy, and Waterview areas.

### **Industrial**

The 1,700 acres devoted to industrial land development represent 2.5% of the County's land area. The great majority of this industrial land area is utilized by the Giant Industries oil refinery and the Dominion Virginia Power Yorktown Power Station, both located on the Goodwin Neck peninsula. These two operations comprise the major portion of the General Industrial activities in York County. Also included in the General Industrial category for the purposes of this analysis are the numerous automobile salvage yards at the southern end of the Route 17 corridor in Tabb. The categorization of these businesses as heavy industrial uses is based on their impact on their surroundings in terms of characteristics such as noise, dust, odor, traffic generation, and visual appearance. Approximately 1,250 acres are classified as heavy or general industrial.

Light or limited industrial activities are scattered throughout the County and are in many cases located in the midst of commercially oriented areas. Examples of this activity are the Bethel, Busch, Ewell, Greene, and Victory industrial parks.

### **Public/Institutional**

Public uses in the County include County schools, fire stations, libraries, and office buildings, the State-operated Victory Center at Yorktown, U.S. post offices, and the Commonwealth of Virginia's Emergency Fuel Depot property near Cheatham Annex. The institutional category of land uses includes places of worship, the new Sentara Williamsburg Community Hospital under construction on Mooretown Road, the Historic Triangle Community Services Center and the Williamsburg water filtration plant on Waller Mill Road...however, a large portion of the land area is attributable to the Colonial Coast Girl Scout Council camp in the Skimino area of the County. Lands classified as public or institutional occupy a small proportion (1.7%) of the County's gross land area.

### **Military**

Military landholdings account for approximately 20,9400 acres, or almost a third (31.83%) of the County's gross land area. Included under this classification are the Bethel Manor military housing complex, the U.S. Coast Guard Training Center, the Yorktown Naval Weapons Station, the Cheatham Annex Naval Supply Center, and Camp Peary. As previously noted, this vast amount of military property exerts a major influence on land use and development patterns in York County. Most notable is the fact that the Naval Weapons Station "divides" the County into its "upper" and "lower" portions.

### **Open Space**

The Open Space category is fairly broad, encompassing conservation areas, agricultural land, and vacant land that is privately owned. Lands identified under the Conservation category include the Colonial National Historical Park, the various County parks, the City of Williamsburg's Waller Mill Park, and the extensive holdings of the Newport News and Williamsburg Waterworks (Harwood's Mill, Lee Hall, and Waller Mill watersheds). Also included are the various designated common areas within residential subdivisions. The 16,400 acres that these uses occupy represent a quarter (25.2%) of the County's land area.

The Agricultural category includes commercially productive agricultural activities that are participating in the Land Use Assessment program. They account for an estimated 676 acres or 1.0% of the County's land area. The majority of these activities are concentrated in the Lightfoot and Skimino areas. Several other agricultural operations are spread throughout the County;



however, none are extensive. In general, agricultural activities in York County contribute more to the perception of a rural atmosphere than they do to the County's economic base.

Vacant and undeveloped privately owned land comprises almost 11,200 acres, or 17.02% of the County's land area. These are the areas to which growth will be targeted in the years ahead. Large areas of contiguous vacant land are prominent in the upper County, especially in the Skimino and Lightfoot areas and the lands surrounding Interstate 64 interchanges at Camp Peary/Route 143 and Route 199/Water Country USA. In the lower County, large areas of vacant land are largely limited to environmentally constrained land in the Seaford, Baytree Beach, York Point, and Tabb areas, much of which has limited development potential. Most of the very large potential residential development sites in the lower County have been used. It is unlikely that major planned developments on the magnitude of Coventry, Kiln Creek or Yorkshire Downs will be proposed, simply because tracts that large are unavailable. There are still significant opportunities, however, for additional infill development (the development of new housing or other uses on scattered vacant sites in a built-up area<sup>1</sup>), in both the upper County and the lower County

## **COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE**

Traditionally the term *land use* has been fairly narrowly construed to encompass the basic category of use – i.e., residential, commercial, or industrial – that describes how land is or will be developed. More appropriate, however, is a broader definition encompassing not just the type of use but how it will be designed and what it will look like. Just as most County residents take pride in the character and appearance of their homes and properties, so too do they have keen interest in the overall character and appearance of the County in which they live. Whether one's interest is in preserving the County's "rural character" (a term that has various definitions), seeing vacant commercial buildings occupied, having architecturally attractive commercial and residential buildings, living on tree-lined residential streets, or a host of other objectives, there is a strong desire to preserve and improve York County as a pleasant and attractive place to live, work and enjoy leisure time.

York County is blessed by its geography. With over 200 miles of shoreline and associated tidal areas and almost 50% of its total land area owned by the Federal government (military or National Park Service) or as parts of watersheds (Newport News Waterworks or City of Williamsburg waterworks), there are vast areas of green space that are likely to remain that way for many generations. These "green" areas are supplemented by undeveloped privately owned lands with extensive tree cover and by developed properties where attention and effort have been given to protecting and enhancing the landscape. This vast amount of green/open space is one of the County's principal *character-defining* features and, most likely, is the reason that so many perceive the County to be *rural*, or at least *semi-rural*.

Although development has altered much of the County's natural landscape, policies and regulations put in place nearly 50 years ago (with the adoption of the County's first Zoning Ordinance in 1957), and improved upon since, have helped to minimize the *character-altering* impacts of that development. Could those techniques have been more aggressive and have required greater amounts of landscaping or open space? Yes – but so too could they have been less stringent. Suffice it to say that the land use controls imposed over the past 50 years have struck the balance that was considered appropriate at the time between private property rights and the citizen concerns. Now, as the County is about to enter its second 50 years of planning and zoning history, citizen responses indicate a desire for the bar to be raised to a higher level to ensure that the inevitable growth and development that occurs has a positive *defining* effect on the character and appearance of the County.

---

<sup>1</sup> Harvey S. Moskowitz and Carl G. Lindbloom, *The Latest Illustrated Book of Development Definitions* (Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey: New Brunswick, NJ), 2004, p. 207

property owners to improve building façades, signage, landscaping and general site conditions. The overall goal of the program is to improve the aesthetics and functionality of the corridor businesses in order to maintain and increase their economic viability. While initially developed for Route 17, this program is readily transferable to other commercial corridors in the County.

### **Tax Exemption Program for Rehabilitation, Renovation or Replacement of Commercial and Industrial Structures**

Many properties on the County's commercial corridors are occupied by older structures, and it is likely that some owners are hesitant to renovate or expand because improvements can result in increased real estate assessments and an increased tax burden. Section 58.1-3221 of the Code of Virginia provides authority for localities to provide for the partial exemption from real estate tax for commercial and industrial structures that are twenty (20) or more years of age. The exemption may be made available for a period not to exceed fifteen (15) years. By providing a real estate tax exemption for property improvements to older commercial structures in the corridor, owners will have a real incentive to improve and maintain the quality of their property. Section 58.1-3221 of the Code of Virginia provides the following specific guidelines for this program. As a result of the recommendations of the Route 17 Revitalization Committee, the Board of Supervisors adopted a tax exemption program for the Route 17 corridor in 2004. This same type of program could be established on other commercial corridors as determined appropriate by the Board of Supervisors.

### **Underground Utilities**

Overhead utility lines add to the visual clutter, detract from the appearance of even the best looking and best maintained properties, and limit the type and size of the landscaping that can be planted along the road shoulder and the fronts of properties. In addition, the overhead lines are subject to damage from automobile accidents (poles hit and snapped) and during storms (from limbs or trees falling across the lines). For these reasons, underground utilities are required in York County in all new subdivisions and on-site in all new commercial and industrial developments. In addition, where new development activity necessitates relocation of roadside overhead lines, they must be placed underground in their new location. Areas where utilities have been placed underground (e.g., in front of Washington Square and Grafton Shopping Centers, along Victory Boulevard in the Kiln Creek area) are noticeably more attractive as a result. Unfortunately, the cost of putting existing lines underground is extremely high and, while the County has set aside a small sum (\$50,000) in the annual Capital Improvements Program Budget for several years, the available amount is a "drop in the bucket" in relation to the \$1 million/mile general cost estimate for such work.

One of the most opportune times to consider undergrounding utilities is in conjunction with road improvement projects since VDOT policies allow certain "credits" for utility relocation work that is necessitated by a road project. As a result of these opportunities, the Board of Supervisors has approved a major commitment of County funds (to be matched through the VDOT Revenue Sharing Program) to facilitate undergrounding of utilities along most of the length of the proposed Route 17 widening project between Wolftrap Road and Route 134. In addition, the Board has indicated a desire to target Bypass Road as the next area for an undergrounding effort.

### **Telecommunications Towers**

Wireless telecommunications infrastructure has given rise to another set of utility-related aesthetic concerns with the proliferation of telecommunications towers. Consumer demand for cellular phones, paging devices, two-way radios, public safety services, and other wireless telecommunication services has increased sharply in just the last 5-10 years. The fast-paced wireless communications industry has presented local governments with the challenge of guiding the siting of the industry's antennas and support structures in their communities. At

times it is difficult to find suitable locations that meet both the expectations of the wireless industry and the aesthetic goals of the community.

Support structures are typically needed for the placement of an industry's antennas to deliver wireless communications. Antennas must be at specific heights (typically between 150' and 200') to transmit and receive radio frequencies adequately. Existing support structures – such as buildings, utility poles, pylons, church steeples, water towers, highway signs, lighting poles, and existing towers – can help accommodate the industry's antennas when they are located in or near a provider's service area. Basically, any structure that meets the height requirements needed by the service provider can be adapted to accommodate an antenna. The industry often uses existing support structures when available but when they are not available the communications provider must construct a support structure – usually a communications pole or tower – capable of supporting its antenna.

Although the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 did not preempt local zoning authority, localities are somewhat constrained in their ability to deny requests for towers. Such decisions may be overturned by the Federal Communications Commission or federal courts if the intent or the effect of the decision is to discriminate between types of communications service providers, if the decision is not reached within a reasonable period of time, if the denial is unreasonable, or if the denial is based on public health concerns relating to radio frequency emissions. In addition, the Act places an obligation upon localities to assist the telecommunications providers in finding a facility somewhere within the footprint (coverage area).

Through its development ordinances and Special Use Permit conditions for towers, the County works to ensure that support structures are properly sited. Each potential tower site is different, but there are certain general policies that should govern where such facilities are located. Towers should not be located in or near historic areas or along tourist corridors or greenbelt roads and ideally should be located in industrial and commercial areas rather than in residential neighborhoods. In accordance with the County's policy that it is preferable to have fewer towers, even if that means they have to be taller than they would otherwise be, wireless providers should be required to share towers (i.e., co-locate) whenever possible and existing structures should be used when available. When no other feasible option exists, communication towers will be allowed to encroach on these areas if facilities are designed appropriately and are compatible with the character of the protected areas. In such cases, antenna support structures should be designed to blend into the environment whenever possible. Finally, it is important to ensure that support structures are removed in a timely manner when they are no longer in use.

### **Additional County Funded Maintenance**

Since 1999, the County has supplemented VDOT's mowing and litter pick-up efforts on portions of the Route 17 corridor and at the Route 143 "gateway" to the County off I-64 (Camp Peary interchange) to enhance their appearance. This effort ensures that the medians and shoulder areas are mowed at least every two weeks, in contrast to the every two months or more frequency that is the norm given VDOT's resource limitations. The County program initially depended on workforces provided by the Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail; however, over the past several years the manpower available from the jail has declined. As a result, the County crews have assumed a greater role, and significant funding has been provided by the Board of Supervisors to allow maintenance contracts to be awarded to the private sector. Through these commitments, the County now maintains or funds private sector maintenance on virtually the entire Route 17 corridor; on Route 171 from Route 134 to the Newport News city line; on Route 143 at the Route 199 interchange, the Camp Peary interchange, and at Second Street; and on Route 199 and Mooretown Road in the Lightfoot area. The aesthetic benefits of this program have been significant and, as VDOT's resources continue to decline, there will likely be additional corridors where such County-funded efforts are necessary in order to achieve the appearance standards that citizens desire.

designation, desirable features of areas encompassed by this designation include full transportation access (highway, rail, water, air), available utilities, and favorable soil conditions.

### **Mixed Use**

A Mixed Use overlay designation has been applied to certain areas of the County that have been identified as being potentially appropriate for a master-planned development approach that includes some type of mixed use development. This overlay designation is intended to create well-designed communities in which people can live, work, and recreate by providing opportunities for a mix of commercial and residential uses – and different types of residential uses (i.e., detached, attached, and apartments) – within a single, relatively compact development under a unified, coherent master plan. Proposed uses should have a high degree of physical and functional integration with one another, including extensive pedestrian and bicycle connectivity.

The range of permitted uses envisioned within any given mixed use development includes ~~are-is~~ but not limited to homes (detached, attached, and apartments), senior housing, hotels and motels, offices, retail shops, restaurants, and, depending on the location, even light manufacturing. The balance of residential and commercial uses should generally reflect the underlying land use designation(s) and be compatible with adjacent land uses. Care ~~should~~ must be exercised in evaluating any proposed mixed-use development to ensure that the introduction of a residential component into areas where the underlying designation is not residential will not significantly increase the County's maximum build-out population of 80,000. Likewise, care must be exercised in evaluating a proposal to introduce a commercial component into an area with an underlying residential designation to ensure compatibility with the surrounding area and the scale of the mixed use project. It is also critical that any proposed mixed-use development be designed-and, through proffered conditions, ~~will be able~~ to mitigate public service and infrastructure impacts. Furthermore, in areas with an underlying commercial and/or industrial designation, the mix of uses must have a positive fiscal impact; in other words, the balance of nonresidential and residential uses must be such that the net revenues generated by the former more than compensate for the net expenditures generated by the latter.

~~It should be recognized that W~~while the Mixed Use overlay designation ~~has been~~ is applied to several locations, the County's ability to accommodate mixed-use development will be limited not just by market forces but also by the availability of infrastructure and public services. The identification of specific areas for mixed use should not be construed as excluding other areas from consideration for mixed-use development, nor should it be construed as a guarantee that a mixed-use development, if proposed in one of these areas, would necessarily be approved. Because of their uniqueness, it is critical to require that any proposed mixed-use developments be individually approved by the Board of Supervisors with Planning Commission review and public hearings.

<b>2025 Land Use Summary</b>		
<b>Land Use Designation</b>	<b>Gross Acreage</b>	<b>Undeveloped Acreage</b>
Low Density Residential	12,040	4,027
Medium Density Residential	4,850	1,170
High Density Residential	2,760	334
Multi-Family Residential	520	42
<b>RESIDENTIAL TOTAL</b>	<b>20,150</b>	<b>5,573</b>
General Business	1,480	371
Limited Business	590	328
Economic Opportunity	3,640	2,746
Limited Industrial	970	89
General Industrial	2,180	954

<b>COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL TOTAL</b>	8,860	4,488
Conservation	15,370	1,076
Yorktown		8
<u>None/Not Applicable</u>		7
Military	20,750	NA
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>65,130</b>	<b>11,152</b>

Table 2

## SUB-AREA DESCRIPTIONS

The specific land use designations for each area of the County are discussed in detail in the following pages. Except in areas that are currently vacant, land use designations are in large part intended to reflect existing development. In areas where the land use designation differs from existing development, the designation has been selected with the intention of promoting redevelopment and/or a change in the area's character to ensure compatibility with the surrounding area and/or other land use objectives. It should be recognized that, as set forth in 15.2-2223 of the *Code of Virginia*, each locality's comprehensive plan "shall be general in nature, in that it shall designate the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature shown on the plan..." Consistent with that requirement, the land use designations shown on the 2025 Land Use Map should not be construed as parcel-specific. Rather, they are intended to reflect the general location of desired land use types, with the actual use opportunities to be defined on a parcel-by-parcel basis through the Zoning Ordinance district classifications. In cases where there may be a conflict between the map and the textual description contained herein, the text should be considered as taking precedence.

### 1. Skimino

The Skimino area east of I-64 is in the northernmost part of the County and is one of its most rural areas. Residential lots are relatively large, and utilities are generally unavailable as yet. The topography is severe and road conditions generally poor. The existing development character should continue and thus this area is designated Low Density Residential. However, a Limited Business node has been designated for the area immediately surrounding the east side (i.e., Newman Road) of the I-64 Lightfoot interchange because of its ~~excellent~~ topography, access, and configuration. Commercial development at this node should be oriented toward serving the needs of the surrounding community rather than a regional or tourist market. Such development should be a coordinated concentration of retail service uses of a scale in keeping with the character and market demands of the immediately surrounding ~~development~~ residential areas. Any commercial development in this area, however, should be deferred until public water and sewer are available.

The scale of commercial uses should be limited to businesses that are compatible with residential development and are oriented primarily toward serving the day-to-day needs of nearby residential communities. Businesses should be of a type that generally operate only during daylight hours, have low external impacts in terms of noise, light, and activity levels, and are architecturally compatible with residential development. Specific design features would include:

- Limitations on signage – number, type (monument only), area, height, colors
- Limitations on building size (footprint) and height
- Specific architectural design guidelines, including building materials, colors, architectural style, pitched roofs following a consistent, distinct, coherent overall architectural character or theme
- Parking areas shielded from public rights-of-way or, preferably, located to the rear of any structure(s)



- Landscaping – buffers to screen views from adjacent properties and public rights-of-way; heavy parking lot landscaping; street trees
- Pedestrian connectivity both internal and external to the commercial area
- Prohibition of incompatible uses – such as 24-hour businesses and businesses oriented toward serving a tourist or regional market rather than a local market
- Prohibition of exposed neon
- Minimal number of curb cuts
- Limitations on outdoor storage and sales
- Limitations on site lighting ( $\leq 0.1$  foot-candle at property line)

These development and design objectives should be implemented by ensuring that the initial zoning classification of the land is at the lowest commercial intensity ~~level~~ (i.e., Limited Business) with the understanding that requests for rezoning to General Business could be favorably considered if the considerations noted above regarding uses and design are adequately addressed through voluntarily proffered conditions.

This node is part of ~~a large area of~~ about 300 acres of contiguous undeveloped land stretching along Fenton Mill Road from Newman Road all the way to Barlow Road. Water and sewer extensions will double the potential lot yield in much of this area, which will likely trigger accelerated development activity. Topography in much of this area is severe, and Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas line Carters Creek, which runs through this area. These environmental constraints limit the development possibilities for much of this property while creating an opportunity for a master-planned development that could incorporate both Limited Business and clustered residential development that preserves significant open space. The carrying capacity of Fenton Mill Road south of Newman Road should be preserved through a prohibition on is not suitable for individual residential driveways, and should be reserved for with only commercial frontage at the Limited Business node only, with limited points of access, and a greenbelt designation to ensure continued attractiveness of the Interstate corridor. Areas directly adjacent to existing residential development should remain residential and any development thereon should be compatible with neighboring properties in terms of housing type, lot size, and density. Commercial uses of a Limited Business character could be appropriate also in the interior of a master-planned, primarily residential development (i.e., not within the node).

A number of limited industrial uses have been established at the eastern end of Fenton Mill Road, but the expansion of these uses to adjacent properties would not be compatible with this area's rural character. This area is designated Low Density Residential.

## **2. Lightfoot**

The character of the Lightfoot area has changed dramatically in recent years with the completion of Route 199, which has made the Route 199/Lightfoot interchange of I-64 one of the primary entrances to Williamsburg. Accessibility was further improved by the extension of Mooretown Road to Lightfoot Road, with an interchange at Route 199, and the County funded utility improvements to serve future economic development. As a result, the Lightfoot area south of Route 199 has emerged as a major regional activity center with the construction of Lowe's, Wal-Mart, and Great Wolf Lodge on East Rochambeau Drive and Home Depot, Sentara Williamsburg Community Hospital, International Center, and Williamsburg Marketcenter on Mooretown Road. Properties along the Route 199 and Mooretown Road corridors in Lightfoot are designated Economic Opportunity, and this designation encompasses the area between Mooretown and Old Mooretown Road, except for a short section of Old Mooretown Road frontage that is designated Low Density Residential to recognize existing residences while still providing opportunities behind those frontage areas for office or commercial development ancillary to the hospital now under construction in this location. Existing homes along East Rochambeau Drive and Oaktree Road are also recognized with a Low Density Residential designation; however, the area between those two roads is designated General Business. This strip of land is a little over 5,000 feet long and only 300 feet wide at its widest point, and the

General Business. A large area of contiguous undeveloped land under single ownership (the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation) encompasses the eastern section of Bypass Road, both sides of Route 132, and both sides of Route 143 surrounding the west side of the I-64/Camp Peary interchange. However, because of this corridor's proximity to the historic area, any new development along Bypass Road must be held to rigorous design standards – especially with regard to such features as signage, landscaping and tree preservation, and building colors – to protect the area's visual appeal. A General Business node has been established at the Bypass Road/Waller Mill Road intersection based on its excellent accessibility and existing development.

The land is designated Economic Opportunity on both sides of Route 132 and on both sides of Route 143 on the west side of the interchange, which is also designated as a potential mixed use area. While the Economic Opportunity designation is appropriate around the interchange, which is also designated as an Economic Development Priority Area, a Limited Business designation along Route 132 would offer better protection of this corridor, which is a major gateway into the Williamsburg area, and ensure less intensive commercial development, such as a campus-style office complex. Since the 133-acre property on the west side of Route 132 also has about 1,200 feet of frontage along Bypass Road, and since the Bypass Road corridor is a major tourist corridor that warrants special character-protecting measures, it would be appropriate to designate the CW property on the south side of Bypass Road is designated for Limited Business as well. It is recognized that the Limited Business designation may not provide the full range of development opportunities appropriate for this area and, in that regard, consideration could be given to rezoning requests that propose a General Business classification subject to development proffers that assure compatibility with the "gateway" character of the area.

A creek running through the CW property serves as a natural dividing line between commercial and residential property, with the western portion, which fronts on the residential section of Waller Mill Road, designated for residential development. With the completion of the Mooretown Road corridor to Route 199, Waller Mill Road between Bypass and Mooretown Roads is currently experiencing moderate AM and PM peak-hour congestion, and its width drops considerably beyond Plantation Drive; this segment is where most of the CW property is located. A Low-Density designation would prevent the over-burdening of Waller Mill Road if the property were to be developed with access only from Waller Mill Road and would not be inconsistent with the established development character, which is relatively sparse. However, if the area is master-planned to include alternate access points to Bypass Road and/or Route 132, consideration could be given to an increased density of development.

Existing residential development in this area is recognized with a Medium-Density Residential designation on the north side (i.e., along Waller Mill Road), and a Multi-Family Residential designation on the south side (i.e., Commons Way) where the Williamsburg Commons condominiums and duplexes are located and a senior apartment complex has been approved.

## **5. Richmond Road**

Richmond Road runs through Williamsburg and James City County and is a principal tourist and commercial corridor in the Williamsburg area. Some of the retail development along Richmond Road is located in York County. Accordingly, these properties are designated General Business.

## **6. Queens Lake**

The Queens Lake area encompasses the Queens Lake, Royal Grant, Creekside Landing, and Parkway Estates subdivisions as well as New Quarter Park. North of the Colonial Parkway and east of Interstate 64, the Queens Lake subdivision and the area between Queens Lake and Parkway Estates have been recognized with a Low-Density Residential designation. Most of the lots in Queens Lake are developed and further expansion is limited by surrounding Queen



## **12. Yorktown**

Yorktown is designated as an historical village without reference to specific land uses. The intent of this designation is to recognize the unique history of the town and to encourage development that is consistent with the historic, residential, and commercial land uses already present. The historic buildings of Yorktown are contained in *The Virginia Landmarks Register*, and some are listed on the *National Register of Historic Landmarks*. Special regulations that recognize the colonial architecture and historic heritage have been implemented to provide opportunities for a variety of land uses that will complement the unique character of the village. More specific recommendations for land uses and improvements in Yorktown are contained in the *Yorktown Master Plan*, which is a separate document but is incorporated into this *Comprehensive Plan* by reference.

The Colonial National Historical Park surrounds the village and is designated Conservation, as are the various parcels that the National Park Service owns in the Moore House Road area, where privately owned residences are recognized with a Medium Density Residential designation.

The U. S. Coast Guard Training Center Yorktown located on the York River at the end of Moore House Road is designated Military.

## **13. Lackey/Goosley Road**

Most of the privately owned land in Lackey has been designated High-Density Residential in recognition of the existing development character and the availability of public water and sewer. A major portion of Route 238 in Lackey is designated General Business to recognize various existing neighborhood businesses and provide opportunities for additional commercial development of this nature. In addition, the General Business designation is intended to recognize potential for the wider range of business that might be attracted to the area because of the Federal HUBZone designation that applies to Lackey and the surrounding area (Census Tract 505).

A relatively isolated area at the end of Baptist Road, which has a pavement width of approximately 20' and is the only means of ingress and egress, is designated Low Density Residential because of access limitations. It is entirely surrounded by property owned by the National Park Service or Newport News Waterworks, making it ~~virtually-difficult but perhaps not~~ impossible to provide any additional access. Higher density development should be entertained only in the event of developer-funded improvements to provide a second means of access.

A Low-Density Residential designation has been applied to a small area along Crawford Road near its intersection with Goosley Road in recognition of existing development. This area is surrounded by NPS property, and any further development should be of a low-density character because of severely restrictive soil conditions, absence of utilities, and limited accessibility. A portion of the privately-owned land area along Goosley Road has been designated Multi-Family Residential in recognition of the Kings Court subdivision, the Yorktown Square Apartments, and Rivermeade Apartments.

## **14. Route 17**

As the County's primary commercial and transportation corridor, Route 17 (George Washington Memorial Highway) is recognized in this plan as an area worthy of special consideration. Extensive information and planning recommendations are established for this corridor in the separate *Route 17 Corridor Master Plan*, dated January 9, 1996, which is incorporated by reference as a part of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

11. Minimize the visual obtrusiveness of telecommunications towers.

11.12. Pursue and/or continue regulatory, non-regulatory and incentive-based programs that help preserve and enhance the positive character-defining attributes of the County such as abundant open space, tree-lined road corridors, attractive “gateway” entrances, well-landscaped commercial areas, and pleasant residential settings.

12.13. Encourage the use of cluster development techniques and conservation easements to help preserve open space.

13.14. Maintain higher development performance standards at major “gateway” entrances and along major “gateway” corridors.

**Implementation Strategies**

1. Apply the appropriate land use density (units per acre) and intensity (type of use) to each parcel in the County based on the property’s physical characteristics and the present or planned availability of public infrastructure, facilities, and services.

2. Establish maximum residential densities as follows:

Single-Family:

- |                  |                              |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| • Low Density    | 1.0 dwelling unit per acre   |
| • Medium Density | 1.75 dwelling units per acre |
| • High Density   | 3.0 dwelling units per acre  |

Multi-Family: 10.0 units per acre

3. Revise the Zoning Ordinance and Map as necessary to conform with the 2025 Land Use Map.

4. Continue to require lower residential development densities in areas where public utilities are not available.

5. In evaluating rezoning and use permit requests, consider the potential impact of the proposed development on public facilities, services, and infrastructure as well as potential fiscal impacts.

6. Guide specific types and densities of development to specific areas of the County through planning, zoning, and utility extension policies.

7. Use all available tools and techniques to defer all or part of permitted development until such time as adequate public infrastructure is in place to support the development, and seek enabling legislation to expand the County’s authority in this regard.

8. Use the capital improvement programming process to plan and fund utility and transportation improvements that will guide industrial and commercial development to areas designated for such uses.

9. Maintain “compatibility zones” in areas adjoining jurisdictional boundaries to provide for comparable zoning and development patterns

10. Use conservation easements, clustering, and other techniques to preserve open space.

21. Ensure that development along the above-named corridors, and along Interstate 64, protects the natural vegetation and vistas through the establishment of “greenbelt” designations.
22. Work with VDOT, the Metropolitan Planning Organization, other jurisdictions and other involved parties to ensure that widening of Interstate 64 is accomplished in a manner that preserves and protects to the maximum extent possible the appealing and attractive tree-lined median areas.
23. Provide business incentives to offer:
  - Free design assistance to businesses interested in property improvements;
  - Matching Grant funding for implementing improvements;
  - Tax exemption for value enhancements associated with renovations;
24. Establish a dedicated funding source for County land acquisition for blight removal, greenways, and conservation easements by the 2007-08 Fiscal Year.
25. Facilitate rehabilitation of abandoned and “blighted” properties in areas targeted for enhancement and prepare them to accommodate redevelopment proposals through negotiation of landscape/maintenance easements or fee simple purchase.
26. In order to address and eliminate blight, adopt and enforce Part III of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code.
27. Continue to require underground utilities in conjunction with new development and pursue opportunities for undergrounding of existing overhead utilities in conjunction with road improvement projects (e.g., along Route 17) or as separate projects (funded by grant/matching funds and/or County funds) along other high-visibility “gateway” corridors.
28. Continue allocation and accumulation of funds in amounts that will support acquisition of strategically located greenways and/or conservation easements that will contribute positively to the visual character and appearance of the County.
29. Permit construction of new telecommunications towers only where a proven need exists and only when all other opportunities, such as co-location on an existing tower or utilization of other existing structures, have been exhausted.
30. Discourage or prohibit telecommunications towers in historic or residential areas except where no other practical option exists.